

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING SERVICES**

Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2020/21





Foreword



Welcome to our Annual Charter Performance Report which outlines how we performed during 2020/21 against the Outcomes and Standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The content and the style of the report was agreed following a consultation with tenants and covers those areas that tenants have said are important to them and I hope that it is received as positively as previous reports have been.

This past year has been another busy and challenging period across housing services as we continue to respond to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic whilst continuing to deliver improving customer focused housing services. The pandemic has affected the everyday lives of individuals and communities across West Dunbartonshire and posed significant challenges to the delivery of our services. Whilst we have aimed to minimise the impact on our residents as much as possible, there has been some disruption and this has affected our service delivery and performance in some areas.

Some of our key achievements during the past year include providing a full emergency response throughout the pandemic and managing the significant increase in demand for our homelessness services due to Covid-19. This has included the scaling up of our Housing First initiative, which supports some of those with the most complex needs to access and keep their homes. We also launched a new Neighbourhood Service, extended the hours of our Anti-Social Behaviour Service and developed a new tenant liaison service to assist vulnerable tenants.

A new policy has been introduced to strengthen the Council's "No Home for Domestic Abuse" approach to preventing and addressing domestic abuse. Our 'zero tolerance' approach has been updated to reflect new national legislation which gives the Council and all social landlords explicit powers to remove perpetrators of domestic abuse from properties in order to protect victims and help them keep their homes.

We continue to take action to improve communication with tenants and also develop the opportunities to get involved and influence the decision making process. During the last year an updated Tenant Participation Strategy has been developed and approved and we carried out a successful rent setting consultation with tenants, which a record number took part in. We have worked hard to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic in this important area of activity, using digital platforms to replace face to face meetings and we remain proud of our relationship with the many tenant groups that we have and how effective they are in representing their communities.

As well as summarising our performance in 2020/21, the report sets out some of the actions we will be taking during 2021/22 in order to respond positively to the challenges we face and ensure that we achieve our goal of being a top performing landlord.

Peter Barry
Chief Officer,
Housing and Employability



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Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the outcomes and standards that the Scottish Government expects landlords to be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

All social landlords are expected to assess their performance against these Charter outcomes on an annual basis and produce a report based on this assessment which includes actions being taken to address any areas of weakness.

This report outlines how Housing Services performed during 2020/21. It focuses on the areas that tenants have said are the most important to them and each outcome includes key measures of performance, whether this performance has improved or not since the previous year and how this performance compares to other landlords.

Tenant involvement in this report

The Scottish Social Housing Charter expects landlords to fully involve tenants in assessing and reporting their performance. In August and September 2019, tenants were involved in reviewing the content, style and format of this report.

Lots of valuable feedback was provided and all of the changes asked for by tenants were made and have been included in subsequent reports.

Another key task of the review was to consider the best group of landlords to compare our performance against. There are many “peer groups” that can be used, each with some benefits and drawbacks. In the end, tenants have asked that the report shows how our performance compares with that of all the other local authorities in Scotland that have housing stock.

This comparison is shown using symbols, which again have been reviewed, are used consistently throughout the report and are explained below.

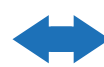
Comparison with the previous year



Better



Poorer



No change

Comparison with other landlords



Top quarter



Second quarter



Third quarter



Bottom quarter



Outcomes 2,3

Communication and Participation

Aims:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides. Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

We continue to take action to improve communication with tenants and also develop the opportunities to get involved and influence the decision making process.

We also continue to ensure that tenants find it easy to participate in and influence decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. Our Tenant Participation structures are well established and continued to operate virtually throughout the year. Some examples of opportunities to participate are outlined at Tenant Involvement on page 15.

Feedback from the most recent comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey carried out in 2019 showed that the proportion of tenants who feel satisfied that we are good at keeping tenants informed about services and satisfied with the opportunities available to participate in the decision making process have both increased. A further survey is being carried out during 2021 and results will be reported to every tenant via the Housing News.

During 2020/21 we implemented Year 3 of our Tenant Participation Strategy “Involving You” and a new strategy for the period 2021/24 was approved and can be accessed [here](#). Key achievements included developing new digital ways of working in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and a significant increase in tenant involvement in the rent setting consultation. Our full Tenant Participation performance report for 2020/21 can be accessed [here](#).

Performance indicator	2017 survey	2019 survey	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services	84.5%	85.7%	↑	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate in decision making	79.1%	89.3%	↑	

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 1 complaint	11.39 days	10.65 days	↑	
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 2 complaint	24.88 days	35.97 days	↓	

What we are doing in 2021/22

- We will Record outcomes from involving tenants and publicise them through the Housing News and other TP communication channels
- We will explore opportunities to link up with local youth groups to raise awareness of participation opportunities
- We will expand the use of our social media and electronic forms of communication to help tenants keep involved
- We will monitor closely the time taken to respond to complaints received and aim to improve our response times



Outcome 4

Quality of Housing

Aims:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:





Tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020.

Our 'More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire' approach aims to ensure that our new and existing homes in West Dunbartonshire meet the needs of our tenants and future tenants.

The Council's Better Homes Project Board has been strengthened to ensure all our homes meet the best possible standards including energy efficiency standards. This group will ensure the implementation of our Better Homes Asset Management Strategy.

Whilst some programmes have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, we have still made significant progress and a key achievement over the last 12 months was to undertake our bi annual stock assessment exercise. This exercise has highlighted a number of housing areas and property types that require a specific focus and this will be addressed over the next 12 months.

In terms of future investment plans we are keen to strengthen the alignment with tenant priorities and we are aware that additional focus is required in terms of planning and developing our approach to meeting climate change targets to deliver our ambition of increased tenant satisfaction with the quality of our homes.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	76.5%	76.5%		
Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	95.6%	82.8%		

Some of our key plans for 2021/22 are outlined below:

- Improve 500 homes with new heating systems
- Improve 420 homes with new external insulated render
- Improve 450 homes with new roof coverings
- Improve 250 homes with window/door renewals
- Improve 80 homes with kitchen renewals
- Improve 90 homes with bathroom renewals
- Improve 600 homes with electrical shower installs
- Install 2000 smoke / fire detectors installations
- Carry out 280 medical adaptations
- Carry out 500 path/general environmental upgrades

What are we doing in 2021/22

- We will deliver our Capital Investment Programme for 2021/22
- We will implement Year 4 of our Housing Asset Management Strategy



Outcome 5

Repairs and Maintenance

Aim:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

Tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

Performance in relation to repairs and maintenance was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that were put in place during 2020/21. We continued to undertake emergency and essential repairs within appropriate government restrictions and whilst there were periods when a normal repairs service was provided, from November 2020 until 26 April 2021, the service could only respond to emergency and internal essential housing repairs.

Full service provision resumed from 26 April 2021, however the restrictions resulted in the service having a significant number of outstanding non-essential repairs. We are currently implementing a plan to tackle these outstanding repairs and we will continue to react to this challenge as effectively as we can.

Whilst the pandemic had an impact on our overall performance, we recognise there are areas where we can improve and a number of key actions will be implemented aimed at improving the service experienced by tenants.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	4.56 hours	6.14 hours	↓	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	5.25 days	6.76 days	↓	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time	92.9%	89.8%	↓	
Number of times in the reporting year we did not meet our statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or last checked	0	215	↓	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	68.3%	80.5%	↑	

What we are doing in 2021/22

- We will improve the appointment system in place for repairs
- We will take action to improve the call handling performance for tenants reporting repairs
- We will review repairs categories and target times



Outcome 6

Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour



Aim:

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that:

Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Ensuring that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe is a key objective. During 2020/21 the number of cases of anti-social behaviour that were resolved remained high, despite an increase in numbers of reported cases.

We have also introduced a new policy to strengthen our existing **No Home for Domestic Abuse** approach to preventing and addressing domestic abuse based on new legislation which provides explicit powers to remove perpetrators from their homes and prevent them from returning.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	78.5%	78.5%	↔	
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved	94.7%	92.8%	↓	

What are we doing in 2021/22

- We will finalise the review and update our Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- We will promote estate walk about programmes aimed at improving our communities



Outcome 10

Access to Housing

Aim:



Social landlords ensure that:




People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

We are committed to ensuring that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and which meets their needs. In addition to being given information about their prospects of being housed by the council, our application process provides information about how homes are allocated and information about a range of housing options.

A review of our Allocations Policy has been carried out and following consultation with tenants, housing list applicants and other stakeholders, proposals to make improvements to the policy will be made to the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact during 2020/21 as the restrictions imposed restricted letting activity. The numbers on the housing waiting list have increased and we are carrying out a full review of all applications to ensure they are up-to-date and that the level of offers of housing being refused reduces.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	45.6%	46.6%		

Local performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend
Average time to assess housing applications	27 days	3 days	
Percentage of housing applications suspended	1.6%	1.3%	
Percentage of medical applications assessed within 28 day target	33%	77%	

	2019/20	2020/21
Total number of properties	10,042	10,153
Total number of lets in the year	779	702
Total number on waiting list	3,968	6,150
Total number added to waiting list	2,167	2,087

What we are doing 2021/22

- We will carry out a full review of the housing waiting list
- We will update our Housing Allocations Policy



Outcome 11

Tenancy Sustainment

Aim:





Social landlords ensure that:

Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

Providing advice and support to those who need it to remain in their homes is a key priority and we will continue to develop initiatives to ensure that tenants are provided with the help they need to maintain their tenancy.

A Tenant Liaison Service was introduced in April 2020 and whilst the roll out of this service has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, its aim is for officers to work closely with our most vulnerable client group who have complex and challenging needs and who may be at serious risk of losing their tenancy. The tenancy sustainment rate has increased and we hope that this improvement is sustained.

It is important that those tenants who need their home adapted due to age, disability, or caring responsibilities are provided with a quick and efficient service. Our ability to carry out medical adaptations was impacted by the restrictions that were in place last year and the average timescales increased. We have more to do to improve in this area and we are taking a series of actions aimed at reducing these timescales.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of all new tenants housed, who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	89.8%	91.5%		
Average time taken to complete medical adaptations	68 days	123 days		

What are we doing in 2021/22

- **We will implement a series of actions aimed at reducing the average time taken to carry out medical adaptations**
- **We will increase the number of visits carried out with tenants who submit a tenancy termination notice**



Outcome 12

Homeless People

Aim:

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:

Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.







Our approach to homelessness is outlined in our 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, aimed at ensuring that people who have experienced homelessness reach a settled housing solution as quickly as possible, rather than spending long periods of time in temporary accommodation.

This approach builds on the success of our previous homelessness strategy “More than a roof” which made a positive impact and sets out a number of key actions and developments that are being taken to ensure that these improvements are sustained and we continue to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

The homeless service continued to operate throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and faced challenges with an increase in the number of homelessness presentations and an increase in demand for temporary accommodation and support services. We adapted quickly to these challenges and developed new ways of engaging with residents including online and remote service delivery.

We continue to ensure that decisions on all cases are made promptly and efficiently and that households are being provided with temporary accommodation when required. Whilst the numbers who refused accommodation increased during the pandemic, this figure remains well below the Scottish average and satisfaction with the quality of temporary accommodation has increased.

We recognize the need to continually improve the approach to homeless people with the most complex needs and our Housing First initiative forms part of our wider approach to tackling homelessness and repeat homelessness. This approach is targeted at those with a history of issues such as repeat homelessness, multiple and complex support needs and previous engagements with support services which have not led to successful or sustainable housing outcomes.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%		
Percentage of all homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homeless)	4.3%	5.4%		
Percentage of temporary accommodation offers refused	1.8%	6.97%		



Outcome 12

Homeless People continued...

Local performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend
Incidences of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire	1,021	1,053	↓
Percentage of all homeless cases given a decision within 28 days	98.2%	99.6%	↑
Satisfaction with the quality of temporary accommodation	81%	88%	↑

What are we doing in 2021/22

- We will implement Year 3 of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- We will carry out a review of the supported accommodation provision within West Dunbartonshire
- We will scale up our Housing First approach



Outcome 13

Value for Money

Aim:

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for rent collection during 2020/21 with officers adapting to new ways of working to support tenants through a very difficult and challenging time. Officers continued to provide support and assistance to some of the most vulnerable residents in our area and it is positive that the rent collected as a % of rent due is increasing despite these challenges.

Welfare Reform also continues to pose a significant challenge as the number of tenants on Universal Credit continues to increase. We continue to review the processes in place with the DWP to ensure these are streamlined and cover all options available to landlords in relation to maximising direct payments and reduce arrears. We will continue to work with the DWP with a view to reducing the assessment period and via our "Help Us, Help U" approach, we will continue to work closely with tenants, with early intervention and providing support to those who need it being our priority.

Prior to the pandemic our "Every day counts" approach to managing empty homes had delivered good performance in this area. This has been adversely affected by the lockdown and period when letting properties was restricted. Taking actions to address this will be a key focus during 2021/22.

Performance indicator	2019/20	2020/21	Trend	Comparison
Average time to re-let properties	27 days	56 days	↓	
Rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due	0.85%	1.2%	↓	
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due	98.1%	98.9%	↑	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	10.08%	10.35%	↓	

What are we doing in 2021/22

- **We will continue to review ways to improve rent collection**



Outcomes 14 & 15

Rents and Service Charges

Aim:

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them.

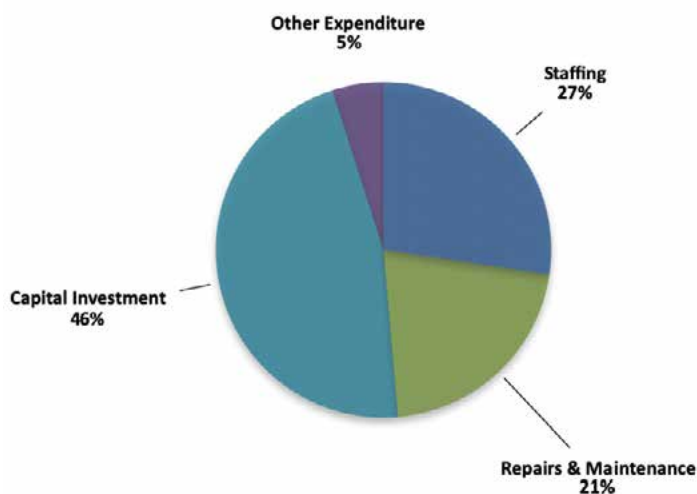
Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

All tenants want to live in good quality, energy efficient homes in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe. For this reason, we continue to invest heavily in both our housing capital programme and our new council house building programme and employ housing officers to manage estates, promote successful tenancy sustainment and tackle anti-social behaviour.

We strive to keep our costs as low as possible and carry out a rent consultation process annually in conjunction with tenants. Last year various options were looked at and discussed with tenants and options were developed which were then subject of the consultation exercise. Tenants supported a below inflation rent rise of 1.5%, which was then recommended and agreed by the Council. This was one of the lowest rent increases in Scotland.

We have a Joint Rent Group comprising tenants, Council officers and the Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee, who are heavily involved in the rent setting process, compliance with the guidance in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and their focus is ensuring Housing and Homelessness Services provide best value for current and future tenants.

We are keen to ensure that the involvement and influence of tenants in this process continues and if you would like to become involved contact Jane Mack on **0798 354 2993** or **jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk**.



Staffing:

employee costs, administration costs (this also includes payments to other departments for example financial services, computer systems, human resources, corporate communications, architectural services) and property costs.

Repairs and Maintenance:

the costs for day to day repairs carried out across all properties and costs associated with medical adaptations.

Capital Investment:

the interest and principal repayments on money we have borrowed to fund the Council's new build programme and carry out major works and improvements (e.g. cladding, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs).

Other expenditure:

costs associated with arrears and the collection of rents, bad debt provision (funds required to account for rents and debt accounts which are not paid to the Council) and Council Tax and lost rent on empty homes.



Tenant Involvement

At West Dunbartonshire Council we have a long history of tenant involvement. Tenant participation helps you to become directly involved in decision making which will influence housing services now and in the future.

Details about the various ways tenants can become involved are available online at <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/>.

You can also following us on Facebook where we post regular information about housing, events and community support information.

There are many ways to participate e.g. through a local Tenants and Residents Association, scrutiny group or rent setting consultation. During the Covid-19 pandemic we developed digital ways for us to meet with tenants and most of our groups now meet via zoom. This pandemic has made us all focus a bit more on our neighbourhood and community so this might be a time that you want to get more involved and have your say. If it is then please get in touch.

We produce a quarterly newspaper called Housing News, which is delivered to all West Dunbartonshire tenants. It provides up to date news on housing in West Dunbartonshire including information on our performance, new housing developments, tenant consultations and information on tenant participation activities.

A copy of Housing News is delivered to you and it is also available online at: <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/housing-news/>

If you would like more information about tenant participation, please get in touch with Jane Mack:

Tel: 0798 354 2993

Email: jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

What do you think of this report?

We are keen to hear your thoughts on this report and how it could be improved. Please use the link or QR code below to complete 5 very short survey questions.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TDY92HQ>



**This document is also available in other languages,
large print and audio format on request.**

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.



British Sign Language

BSL users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL, the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service.

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